APPOINTMENT OF
Secretary General
Letter from the Chair

As you consider the next season of your leadership calling, let me share with you my own passion for the ministry of United Bible Societies. The reason I have served within Bible Society ministry for 15 years is because I believe the Bible leads people to Jesus Christ. It is therefore imperative that access to the Word of God in one's own language should not be a privilege for some, but an opportunity for all.

That's why, over the last five years, United Bible Societies has completed Scripture translations in over 270 languages spoken by 1.7 billion people. It is why we continue to work together to translate, publish and distribute Scriptures to all who want them. In order to help people grow in their relationship with God we also invest in Bible engagement, ministry and advocacy.

For our global network of 150 Bible Societies operating in over 240 countries and territories, it is a moment of tremendous opportunity to reimagine and reshape the way we approach Bible ministry. Sustainability and digital transformation will be pivotal challenges to be faced into in light of COVID-19's impact, and yet we are already seeing the exciting changes that new thinking and approaches can make possible.

As a global Fellowship we celebrate our 75th anniversary this year. The new Secretary General will take on the mantle of leadership at a significant moment in our organisation's journey. We have a rich legacy of diversity, global reach and local ownership to draw on, as well as a tremendous challenge still to meet – the 1.5 billion people who still don’t have access to a full Bible in their own language.

Key to this role will be a global perspective, exceptional relationship skills, strategic thinking, and most importantly, a genuine sense of calling. The Secretary General role is certainly significant in scope and challenge, but it is even more significant in terms of both global and eternal impact.

If you believe, as I do, that the Bible for everyone should be a reality, I encourage you to prayerfully consider whether this may be an opportunity God is opening up for you: a unique leadership role at a unique moment in history.

Elaine Duncan | UBS Global Council Chair and Chief Executive, Scottish Bible Society
Introduction

United Bible Societies (UBS) is passionate for a world where everyone has access to the Bible and can recognise its value for them, their families and communities. We believe that the revelation that God gives humankind through the Bible continues to be of vital importance for every generation and society. We believe that the Bible is more than a book – it can feed the spiritual health of every individual, provide life-giving wisdom for every sphere of society, and help all of us live in fruitful relationship with others and with the environment we share. Working closely with churches, and responding to their felt needs, our aim is to see every individual and community equipped to discover the value of the Bible for themselves.

A significant number of the world's people groups do not have a Bible in their own language. Many millions cannot afford a Bible of their own. The task of translating, producing and distributing the Bible in every heart language in the world remains significant. The task of advocating for the Bible in every culture, and of helping every individual to engage with it, is even greater.

As well as translating, publishing and distributing the Bible, we are also active in areas that encourage meaningful engagement with the Bible and in Bible advocacy (promoting the value of the Bible as a public document). Many Bible Societies are active in literacy training and in ensuring Bible resources are provided for all age groups.

Bible Societies' work is interconfessional, in partnership and co-operation with all major Christian Churches and with many international nongovernmental organisations such as UNESCO. Our translation policy ensures that all our published Bibles are acceptable to the Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox Churches.
More than 215 years after the first Bible Society began, UBS is one of the world’s leading Bible translation agencies, having completed over 70% of the world’s full Bible translations. In 2018 we embarked on an ambitious 20-year journey – the UBS Bible Translation Roadmap – through which we aim to complete 1,200 translations, making Scripture accessible to 600 million people.

The UBS Fellowship is also a leading global publisher and distributor of the Bible, with 30 million full Bibles distributed in 2020. UBS also harnesses the power of digital technology to enhance Bible work – our Digital Bible Library® houses 1,112 full Bibles in 590 languages and these are utilised by apps and websites around the world. (See below for more information about the Digital Bible Library®).

Each Bible Society is unique, tailoring its work to serve local Scripture needs, as well as being part of the global Bible Society movement. In parts of the world where the Bible is not easily available and accessible, Bible Societies focus on heart language Scripture translation and distribution. In other parts of the world, where Scripture is more readily available, the focus may be more on helping people to engage with it and on advocating for the important place of the Bible in society and culture.

Bible Societies vary in size, too: some are small offices with a handful of staff, while others are large, complex organisations. Meeting these different Scripture needs across the world calls for UBS to be increasingly creative and entrepreneurial.

Please read further to consider if this exciting opportunity might be a vocational context where your experience, gifts and passions can be fruitfully invested in the mission of Bible Societies around the world today.
Organisation

UBS is a global Fellowship of around 150 Bible Societies operating in over 240 countries and territories. The UBS Fellowship is one of the world’s leading Christian organisations and is second only to the United Nations in its worldwide reach.

Bible Societies collaborate and work in partnership, delivering much of their international work through UBS. Each Bible Society pays an annual membership fee to be a part of the UBS Fellowship. Individual Bible Societies commit funds to UBS, which is, in turn, responsible for the implementation, management and evaluation of a range of international programmes.

Being responsible for over US$50m of income annually, international activities are carried out through United Bible Societies Association (UBSA), a charity and company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales. The registered office is in Swindon, England.

The 150+ ‘Global Mission Team’ (GMT) at UBSA exists to ensure this work continues until the mission of “the Bible for everyone” is complete. The team, based around the world, is very dispersed, working in complex environments while serving the international Fellowship. It does this by facilitating collaboration among Bible Societies through the provision of shared services in Financial Management, Treasury, Banking, HR, IT and Grant Management. It is also the centre of expertise for translation training, tools and capacity building.

“So also will be the word that I speak – it will not fail to do what I plan for it; it will do everything I send it to do.”

ISAIAH 55:11
Our global impact

BILLIONS OF SCRIPTURES DISTRIBUTED BY BIBLE SOCIETIES
Even with the challenges of COVID-19, last year Bible Societies were able to distribute more than 30 million full Bibles and a further 160 million Scripture items. If every piece of Scripture (including New Testaments and Scripture portions) distributed by the Bible Society network since 2015 was added up, it totals more than 1.9 billion items – enough for almost a quarter of the world’s population.

OVER 700 LANGUAGES NOW WITH A FULL BIBLE
Just over 5.7 billion people (around 80% of the world’s population) now have the whole Bible in their mother tongue.

A MILLION BIBLES FOR CUBA
What seemed impossible in one country became a reality as Bible Societies worked together. Over a five-year period, Cuba distributed a million Bibles. The Bibles were supplied by Bible Societies around the world, demonstrating the impact of the global Fellowship working together.

Alysney Rodríguez Galán from the Cuban Bible Commission of the Cuban Council of Churches said, “Cuba is still a country with no technology to print its own Bibles and no Christian bookstores, but it does not stop the growth of its Church. The soil is ready, and we are ready as well. With people passionate for the Bible, this is the time to go for more!”

INCREDIBLE GROWTH OF THE DIGITAL BIBLE LIBRARY®
Developments in digital technology mean that more people than ever before have access to Scripture. The Digital Bible Library® – a repository of digitised (text, audio, video and braille) Scripture translations by UBS and other Bible translation agencies – is at the heart of this. Set up in 2011, in partnership with Every Tribe Every Nation alliance (ETEN), it now houses over 2,500 Scriptures (Bibles, New Testaments & portions) in 1670 languages used by 5.9 billion people.

Nearly 75% of the full Bible texts in the Digital Bible Library® are provided by UBS. In 2019, almost a quarter of Bible Society full Bibles distributed were downloads.

REJOICING IN ERITREA
Letensea, 42, celebrated with thousands of others in Eritrea at the launch of the very first New Testament in their language, Blin. “Today, I have received food that can fill us up more than anything in the world: this new Scripture speaks to our hearts!”, she exclaimed.

After the celebration, copies of the new Scripture were loaded on to camels to take to villages and churches in remote areas.
The Role of UBS Secretary General

The Secretary General of United Bible Societies serves a unique role within the life of the global United Bible Societies Fellowship:

- global missional leadership across the shared life of our 150 Bible Societies (the majority of whom have local autonomy)
- executive leadership of the United Bible Societies Association organisation of around 150+ staff and $50 million annual income (mostly in international grants)

Therefore, the role captures the functions of an ambassador, a shepherd and a servant leader. A key skill will be casting global missional vision within a complex and cross-cultural context, inspiring Bible Societies to be both effective locally and willing to work together for greater global fruitfulness.

**AMBASSADOR**

The Secretary General carries a responsibility to both establish and nurture relationships with partners, churches, external agencies and other global bodies, promoting the vision, and building working relationships and trust for the extension of the mission.

Fundamental to this role will be a working theological background, an understanding of Christian confessions as they relate to the Bible and an ability to be at ease within many different church traditions and expressions.

**SHEPHERD AND SERVANT LEADER**

As we are a Fellowship of autonomous, interdependent Bible Societies, an ability to cast vision and nurture collaboration are critical to the role, as is a posture of encouragement, listening and empowerment. A future-oriented mindset and a perspective of missional leadership and adaptation is crucial. The turbulence caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the church globally and the UBS Fellowship must navigate through the challenges presented. The Secretary General will play a crucial role in bringing vision as well as managing change.

**ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEADER**

Whilst just one aspect of the role, an understanding of and experience in organisational development and change management is important. With the support of the Chief Operating Officer they will lead the Global Mission Team and its senior leadership team. Providing executive leadership to a team who in turn hold no authority over the Bible Societies they seek to support and influence is a relatively unusual set up.

Extensive travel is usually an intrinsic part of fulfilling these aspects of the role.
Leadership experience and qualities

SPIRITUAL MATURITY

- Maturity of faith that is rooted in a daily walk in prayer and Scripture
- Demonstrates faith by inviting God's voice into every decision: personal or organisational
- An ecumenical thinker; recognises, understands and appreciates the richness and value of different cultural and confessional perspectives and values
- Servant-hearted leader with the heart of a shepherd and the attitude of a servant
- Senses a vocational calling to this role and the mission of the organisation in this season

ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCE

In an environment disrupted by COVID-19, we are facing a future which could be volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. We seek a leader who has:

- Theological understanding and knowledge of Christian confessions
- Missiological expertise and experience
- Proven global leadership skills and experience, and management experience
- Experience in organisational development and managing change
- Track record of leading effectively in international, intercultural and interconfessional environments
- Exceptional strategic thinking abilities in a global intercultural context

DESIRABLE EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

- Knowledge and understanding of service-oriented or membership-related structures within a culturally diverse and global context
- Relevant post-graduate qualifications, for example – MBA; Masters in missiological or biblical studies; etc.

ESSENTIAL PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

- Outstanding interpersonal, written and public-speaking communication skills
- Intercultural intelligence and ideally first-hand cultural immersion experience (i.e. someone who has lived and worked in more than one country, preferably one in the Global South)
- Leadership marked by humility
- Able to demonstrate empathetic listening and influencing ability
- A conciliator with exceptional emotional intelligence
- Future thinker, innovator, creative, curious
- Intellectually agile
- Ability to speak English and at least one other major language
- Consultative and collaborative rather than authoritarian leadership style

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How to Apply

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at unitedbiblesocieties.org/vacancies/ using code SG002JB.

Please send your CV, plus cover letter no longer than two A4 pages, detailing by giving actual examples, of when you have demonstrated the key skills and competencies required for this role. Applications should be submitted in English.

It is the intention of the Search Committee to undertake initial online interviews in early January. Therefore, applications will be reviewed as they arrive and the vacancy will close once there are sufficient applications that meet the criteria for interview.

**GDPR personal data notice**
According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.